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United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 26 June-7 July 2006

Note verbale dated 29 June 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation addressed to the secretariat of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations presents its compliments to the secretariat of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and requests that the attached text of the address of Mr. Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, Chief Firearms Designer, designer of the AK-47, President of the Union of Russian Armourers, consultant to the Director-General of the ROSOBORONEXPORT State Corporation, doctor of technical sciences and holder of the international title "Man of the Twentieth Century", should be circulated as an official Conference document to participants and guests.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 29 June 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the secretariat of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Address by Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, Chief Firearms Designer, designer of the AK-47 assault rifle, President of the Union of Russian Armourers, consultant to the Director-General of the ROSOBORONEXPORT State Corporation, doctor of technical sciences and holder of the international title "Man of the Twentieth Century" to participants and guests at the 2006 Review Conference on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons

The problem that you have gathered here to discuss — the eradication of the illicit production of and trade in small arms and light weapons — is more pressing now than ever before. Thousands if not millions of peaceful citizens around the world are dying because of the uncontrolled use of these weapons. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has rightly called small arms and light weapons weapons of mass destruction.

It is a source of great sorrow for me that the assault rifle which I designed has produced many casualties. I myself fought and defended my country during the Great Patriotic War and was seriously wounded. I am no stranger to the pain of losing comrades in battle. But the tragedy of innocent lives lost at the hands of terrorists is beyond compare.

At this time in my country we are observing with grief and mourning a sad date, the 65th anniversary of the perfidious attack by fascist Germany on the Soviet Union. The Second World War was the bloodiest war in human history. In just under four years, the Soviet Union lost 28 million people. This is why I designed this reliable, effective and simple weapon — to defend the Motherland. During those difficult years, the technical groundwork was done for the construction of this unique weapon, which has gone down in the history of small arms and light weapons in Russia and the world over as the AK-47 7.62 mm assault rifle.

The armies of some 50 countries now use various versions of my assault rifle. I fervently hope that this weapon will always be used in the service of peace, security, honour and justice. Indeed, I am happy to know that in many countries around the world babies are named Kalash as a symbol of liberty won in the struggle for independence and democracy. But at the same time it pains me to see that various counterfeits bearing my name are falling into the hands of terrorists and thugs with increasing frequency.

During the 60 years that the AK has been in existence, nearly 100 million have been produced. But only one tenth of this mighty arsenal has been produced legally. All the others are pirated models and unlicensed imitations. I believe that the culprits here are unscrupulous entrepreneurs, who, in violation of both law and conscience, produce pirated copies of Kalashnikov assault rifles and machine guns, and cynical businessmen who sell these weapons to all and sundry. Nor do I

exonerate those politicians whose short-sightedness has resulted in the uncontrolled proliferation of counterfeit small arms and light weapons the world over.

In this connection, I wish to emphasize once again that the way to guard against this unregulated situation is to have a strict system of accounting and national markings for each unit produced, with mutually accepted systems of marking and information-sharing. In my view, this is a realistic, effective and low-cost way to solve the problem.

The end-user certificate is also of great importance, as it defines clearly to whom, in what quantity, on what terms and for what purpose the arms are being supplied, and stipulates their non-transfer to third parties.

Finally, it is necessary to establish national control over small arms and light weapons and take concrete measures to strengthen and enhance the relevant national laws and regulations. In no way does this diminish the importance of bilateral, regional and global efforts. Moreover, as a small arms designer, I am not indifferent to compliance with intellectual property rights for my weapons.

Alfred Nobel made his greatest discovery when he invented dynamite. However, at the will of politicians, this invention brought death to millions of human beings. It now appears that history is repeating itself, this time with small arms and light weapons. I call on you to demonstrate wisdom. Recall what the ancients said: "*Si vis pacem, para bellum*" (If you want peace, prepare for war). This truth has never yet been disproved in all the centuries of human civilization. May weapons become a way to protect peace, rights and democracy, rather than a tool of terror.

(*Signed*) Mikhail **Kalashnikov**